

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1-11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) A lancet, comprising:

a needle having a pointed tip;

a support body enclosing the needle such that the pointed tip projects beyond the end of the support body;

a removable guard located over the pointed tip of the needle, said guard having been integrally moulded from plastics material with said support body and connected thereto by a breakable neck portion;

said removable guard portion having an outer peripheral thickened rib describing a generally U- or C-shape, a central region of thinner section than said rib and partly surrounded by said rib and a further tip encasing region encasing the tip of the needle, the tip encasing region being of thicker section than said central region and being spaced from adjacent ends of the peripheral thickened ~~region~~ rib such that there are respective gaps therebetween bridged only by said thinner central section.

13. (previously presented) The lancet according to claim 12, wherein the guard is formed with a centrally positioned hole close to the end of the guard remote from the needle point.

14. (currently amended) The lancet according to claim 12, wherein the guard is of generally tab-like form, with the thickened ~~region~~ rib forming arc-like portions on two side edges of the guard which lead to the thinner section of plastics material adjacent to the needle tip.

15. (currently amended) A method of forming a lancet, comprising:

holding a needle in a mould formed to create a support body for holding the base portion of the needle and a removable guard about the pointed needle tip and to form a breakable neck portion between the support body and the guard, the mould having an entry point for plastics material, at the end of the guard remote from the needle point, leading to an outer peripheral thickened hollow rib of generally U- or C-shape which in turn leads to a thinner hollow section approaching the needle tip and a further enlarged hollow region encasing the needle tip, the hollow region encasing the needle tip being of thicker section

than said thinner hollow section, the further enlarged hollow region being spaced from adjacent ends of the peripheral thickened hollow ~~region~~ rib to leave respective gaps therebetween that is bridged by said thinner hollow section; and

injecting plastics material into the mould via the entry point to create the guard about the needle tip.

16. (previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the plastics material flows around both sides of a pin located close to said entry point towards said edge thickened hollow region.

17. (currently amended) The lancet according to claim 13, wherein the guard is of generally tab-like form, with the thickened ~~region~~ rib forming arc-like portions on two side edges of the guard which lead to the thinner section of plastics material adjacent to the needle tip.

18. (new) The lancet according to claim 12, wherein the ends of the peripheral thickened rib are disposed laterally said needle.

19. (new) The method according to claim 15, wherein the ends of the peripheral thickened rib are disposed laterally said needle.

20. (new) A lancet, comprising:

a needle having a pointed tip;

a support body enclosing the needle such that the pointed tip projects beyond the end of the support body;

a removable guard located over the pointed tip of the needle, said guard having been integrally moulded from plastics material with said support body and connected thereto by a breakable neck portion;

said removable guard portion having an outer peripheral thickened rib describing a generally U- or C-shape with ends of the peripheral thickened rib being disposed laterally adjacent said needle, a central region of thinner section than said rib and partly surrounded by said rib and a further tip encasing region encasing the tip of the needle, the tip encasing region being of thicker section than said central region and being spaced from the adjacent ends of the peripheral thickened rib such that there are respective gaps therebetween bridged only by said thinner central section.